

November 24, 2017

Dear FCC Commissioners,

I write you today as an individual with over 40 years of experience in the software engineering industry to **urge you in the strongest terms to not change the existing "net neutrality" rules**. In short, our country needs a free and open internet where all internet traffic is treated equally. I offer you the following arguments against changing the existing neutral framework.

If ISPs are permitted to put into place rules, conditions and fee structures that favor some traffic over another, I believe that any and all of the following scenarios could be implemented:

- Data traffic an individual user generates could be monitored and sorted by the ISP based on the most-used sites. The ISP could then implement a pay structure where, say, the top 5% of the visited sites are charged a premium for future traffic. Thus, ISPs would be able to tailor added fees on a per-user, per-site-visited basis, even if other users rarely visit those same sites. Jane could be charged higher fees to visit site A than John.
- ISPs could easily implement time-of-day fee structures where a user's traffic is monitored and the user's high-use times would be charged a premium even those high-use times may not coincide with global internet high-use times.
- ISPs can easily charge additional fee for popular high-traffic sites such as google, netflix, etc.
- ISPs could easily charge additional traffic fees for sites they view as competitive to their own interests. For example, if an ISP's parent company had holds interest in an online seller that is a competitor, all traffic to that competitor could have added fees.
- ISPs could issue time-of-day or other arbitrary traffic rules based on their higher-paying customer's needs. Instead of the current structure where we all share the same data pipes equally, the lowest-paying customers could be left with little or no service.
- ISPs could implement provider-specific firewalls or traffic blocks. Nothing would impeded ISP A from blocking website B's traffic. Conceivably, ISP A would do this for competitive or even retribution reasons (we have countless historical examples of malicious company owners with personal vendettas against others that are acted out using the clout of a company as cover).
- Content could be blocked for any number of reasons: religious, moral, etc. Today, we have examples of companies refusing to bake wedding cakes because of religious beliefs. One can easily see the same type of arguments used by an ISP to ban traffic. Would Netflix's newest show be banned by an ISP because of content? There is no reason to believe it would not be if a given ISP found it objectionable according to their own "standards." An ISP could easily block perceived objectionable content at both a personal level (say, by blocking Jim's access to sites deemed objectionable) or at a corporate level (say, by blocking Netflix entirely because they have some content deemed objectionable). The ability of an ISP to block content according to an ISP's corporate "standards" is a very serious threat to continued free speech in this country and should be taken very seriously.
- Any structure that favors some companies at the expense of others could ultimately hurt smaller companies with fewer resources than larger ones. This could hurt high-tech new starts as well as other small companies dependent on equal access to the internet. I believe this will ultimately diminish competition which is never good in a free-market system such as ours.

The current ISPs are not suffering. They regularly have record earnings and are some of our country's largest corporations. Changing the rules of the game for them by allowing them to implement arbitrary traffic monitoring, traffic priority frameworks and fee structures will cause millions of average Americans

and smaller businesses to suffer due to higher internet use-fees and possibly worse, no access to content deemed by an ISP to be objectionable. If the current net-neutrality rules are abandoned it should be obvious that individuals and corporations with the greatest resources will benefit while smaller companies and, in particular, poorer individuals will suffer the most. Further exacerbating the inequality in this country is not a direction we should be considering.

The current ISP structure in the US is that there is very little competition in a given market. For the most part, ISPs exist in a monopoly or near-monopoly arrangement. We can all agree that this is not a healthy situation. Much like AT&T's previous government-sanctioned monopoly in the phone market, ISPs currently enjoy the ability to set prices for their services nearly at will. What is needed is not further freedom for ISPs to control traffic content and individual data-stream pricing but rather a structure that creates more ISPs with continued net neutrality.

FCC Chairman Pai's principal argument for abandoning net neutrality is that it will increase innovation and competition. I believe this arrangement to be unjustifiable. Allowing ISPs to dictate what traffic flows and at what cost will make the existing ISPs more profitable thus leading to their increased power and ultimately more mergers and ultimately, less competition - the exact opposite of Pai's claimed benefits.

Again, please **do not alter the existing net neutrality structure.**

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